

This packet provides information and application forms for the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program. This program offers scholarship awards to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are committed to careers in biomedical, behavioral and social science health-related research. The program, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), one of the world's foremost centers for biomedical research and research training, is administered by the Office of Loan Repayment and Scholarship, Office of Intramural Research, Office of the Director, NIH.

#### CONTENTS

Information at a Glance

Applying for a Scholarship

Scholarship Benefits

10-Week Summer Laboratory Experience

Service Obligation after Graduation

Deferment Information Bulletin

Responsibilities of the Academic Institution

The Fine Print

Application Checklist

**Application Forms** 

Envelopes (5)

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, call or write:

National Institutes of Health Office of Loan Repayment and Scholarship 2 Center Drive, Room 2E28 (MSC 0230) Bethesda, Maryland 20892-0230

 Telephone:
 800-528-7689

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 301-480-3123

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#### INFORMATION AT A GLANCE

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Undergraduate Scholarship Program offers scholarship awards to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are committed to careers in biomedical, behavioral and social science health-related research. The program is sponsored by the NIH, one of the world's foremost centers for biomedical research and research training.

The scholarships pay for tuition and reasonable educational and living expenses up to \$20,000 per academic year. In return, recipients are obliged to serve as paid employees in NIH research laboratories during the summer and after graduation. In addition to financial assistance, the scholarship program offers invaluable training and mentoring, as well as practical experience in a state-of-the-art research setting.

#### Why are these scholarships offered?

The goal of the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program is to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds pursue educational and career opportunities in biomedical, behavioral and social science health-related research. The NIH is committed to training and nurturing new researchers and to alerting students to career possibilities in the field of biomedical research. This program focuses on individuals who may have had fewer opportunities than others to pursue research careers.

## Biomedical research and the National Institutes of Health

The National Institutes of Health is the world's largest biomedical research institution and is the lead Federal agency responsible for basic and clinical research. The NIH has more than 1,000 laboratories on its 306-acre campus in Bethesda, Maryland—a suburb of Washington, DC. The NIH is staffed by more than 17,000 people, including nearly 4,000 researchers and health professionals with doctoral degrees. The NIH is

also home to the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center, which contains nearly half of all research hospital beds in the United States.

The NIH mission is to uncover new knowledge that will lead to better health for everyone. The NIH works toward that mission by conducting research in its own laboratories; supporting the research of non-Federal scientists in universities, medical schools, hospitals, and research institutions throughout the country and abroad; helping to train research investigators; and fostering the communication of biomedical information.

#### What are the benefits?

The NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program can award each student up to \$20,000 per academic year. This can be used for tuition, educational expenses such as books and laboratory fees, and reasonable living expenses. The scholarships are awarded for 1 year and may be renewed (no more than 4 years of scholarship support total). Actual award amounts are finalized between the UGSP and the

financial aid office of each participant, after a review of financial need and all available aid. Students are required to file an application for Federal aid by submitting a Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Applications can be accessed at <a href="http://www.ed.gov">http://www.ed.gov</a>.

#### And the obligations?

Although the Undergraduate Scholarship Program carries service obligations to the NIH, the obligations themselves can be considered benefits—providing students with valuable research experience.

#### 10-week summer laboratory experience.

After each year of the scholarship, each student is required to work for 10 weeks as a paid employee in an NIH research laboratory. This employment occurs during the summer after the receipt of the UGSP award. This service will be an opportunity for scholars to gain critical skills by working with experienced NIH researchers. Each scholar will be matched to an NIH researcher, who will serve as a mentor. Students will also attend formal seminars and participate in a variety of educational programs.

#### **Employment at the NIH after graduation.**

After graduation, scholarship recipients are required to serve as full-time employees in an NIH research laboratory. The obligation is 1 year (52 weeks) of full-time employment for each year of scholarship. *Students may defer service obligations for appropriate graduate or medical studies*.

#### Am I eligible?

The Undergraduate Scholarships are awarded on a competitive basis to students who show a commitment to pursuing a career in biomedical, behavioral or social science health-related research at the NIH. The basic qualification requirements are as follows:

- 1. Have a grade point average of 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale) or be within the top 5 percent of your class
- Be from a disadvantaged background.\*
- 3. Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time student for the 2004–2005 academic year at an accredited undergraduate institution.
- 4. Be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or qualified non-citizen of the United States. (See *Applying for a Scholarship* for more information.)

\*Disadvantaged background means that you come from a low-income family, as defined in the fact sheet entitled Applying for a Scholarship.

#### When are applications due?

Complete applications must be received by the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program Office by **February 28, 2004**. Applications should be mailed to:

National Institutes of Health Office of Loan Repayment and Scholarship 2 Center Drive, Room 2E28 (MSC 0230) Bethesda, Maryland 20892-0230

or can be completed online at: <a href="http://ugsp.info.nih.gov">http://ugsp.info.nih.gov</a>

#### When will awards be made?

The NIH expects to award up to 15 scholarships by mid July 2004.



#### APPLYING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

This fact sheet provides you with essential information about applying for the Undergraduate Scholarship Program (UGSP). Application forms are included in this package, along with a contract that all scholarship applicants will be required to sign.

#### **Qualification requirements**

The following are the qualification requirements for the program.

**Citizenship.** Because UGSP participants are employees of the NIH during their training at the NIH, you must qualify for Federal employment. This includes certain citizenship requirements.

You must be a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, or a qualified non-citizen. (Note that some permanent residents are qualified non-citizens. See below.)

A U.S. national is a person who, although not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States. They are generally persons born in outlying possessions of the United States.

If you are a non-U.S. citizen, a) you must be eligible to work in the United States, *and* b) you must qualify for Federal employment.

a) Non-citizens may work in the United States only if they are 1) assigned by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS) to a class of immigrants authorized to be employed (permanent residents, for example), or 2) expressly authorized by the BCIS to be employed.

b) In general non-citizens, even if they are eligible to work in the United States, cannot be hired as Federal employees; however, there are exceptions to this rule. For example, if you are a U.S. permanent resident from a country allied with the United States in a defense effort, you are

eligible for Federal employment. (Because your employment at NIH will take place in the future, your employment eligibility must be based on a permanent status, such as permanent residency. Individuals authorized to work in the United States on a temporary basis do not qualify.)

For a list of countries allied with the United States in a defense effort and for a complete list of exceptions to this rule visit <a href="http://ugsp.info.nih.gov/InfoUGSP/Applying/qualreqr.htm">http://ugsp.info.nih.gov/InfoUGSP/Applying/qualreqr.htm</a>. This site also contains additional information on all of the citizenship requirements.

If you become a UGSP finalist, you will be required to document your citizenship status.

#### Enrollment in an undergraduate institution.

At the time of application, you must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a full-time student for the 2004–2005 academic year at a qualified, accredited institution. The institution must be accredited by an agency recognized by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The institution must also be located in one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Territory of the Pacific Islands (the Republic of Palau), the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Federated States of Micronesia.

The UGSP is not intended for students who already hold a bachelor's or other post-secondary degree.

**Academic status.** To apply, you must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale) or be ranked within the top 5 percent of your class.

**Disadvantaged background.** To be eligible, you must be from a disadvantaged background. This means that your undergraduate institution has certified you as having "exceptional financial need" (EFN), as defined by the Federal Government.

The table on this page lists the latest low-income thresholds used by the Federal Government and published in the *Federal Register*. If your family income for the most recent calendar year is less than that shown for your family size, you qualify as having exception financial need. If you qualify, but have not yet been certified by your school, please consult with your financial aid officer.

#### Additional requirements

The following requirements also apply to applicants.

- You must be eligible for Federal employment.
- You must have no conflicting service obligations.
- You must be free of Federal judgment liens.
- You must be free of delinquent Federal loans.

Further information on each of these is presented in the fact sheet entitled *The Fine Print*.

## Low-Income Levels Approved by Secretary of DHHS to Determine Exceptional Financial Need

## Size of Parents' Family

(Includes only dependents listed on Federal income tax forms)

#### **Income Level**

(Gross income for calendar year 2002, rounded to the nearest \$100)

1	\$17,960
2	
3	
4	The state of the s
5	
6	
7	
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Federal Register, August 5, 2003: 68 FR 46199

#### Filling out the forms

This application is available on-line at: <a href="http://ugsp.info.nih.gov">http://ugsp.info.nih.gov</a>

Application forms for the 2004–2005 scholarship program are also enclosed with this packet. There are four separate forms:

- Application checklist
- Applicant information form
- Undergraduate institution certification form
- Applicant recommendation forms (3 copies)

Application checklist. The checklist should serve as a guide to ensure that you have completed all parts of the application. Please enclose a copy of the checklist with your application so that we can use it when we receive forms from your undergraduate institution and your references.

Applicant information form. This form requests basic information such as your address, daytime and evening telephone numbers, and undergraduate institution. More important, it asks you to discuss your commitment to biomedical science and to assess your own abilities. This information—along with the recommendations provided by your references—will play an important role in the evaluation of your application.

You should not discuss your disadvantaged background in response to the questions on the application form.

Transcripts and test scores. An official copy of your school transcript is required as part of your application. If you are currently a college freshman, we require both your college transcript and your high school transcript. If you are a college student who has attended more than one post-secondary institution, you must send a transcript from each institution. If you are currently a high school senior, we recommend that you send a photocopy of your ACT and/or SAT scores.

#### **Undergraduate institution certification form.**

The undergraduate institution you are attending or are about to attend must complete a certification form as part of your application to the UGSP. You should fill out Section A of this certification form and give it, together with one of the return envelopes, to the financial aid officer at your undergraduate institution. The institution will complete the form and return it directly to the NIH.

If you are not yet enrolled in an undergraduate institution, or if you are transferring to a new school, you should contact the school before submitting the form to explain your situation and ensure that they have the necessary financial information from you.

Applicant recommendation forms. Three recommendations are required as part of your application. You should select three individuals who have direct knowledge of your academic qualities (e.g., science teachers, research or lab supervisors, academic advisors). Please fill out Section A of these forms and give the form, along with an attached return envelope, to each of your recommenders. They should return the form directly to the NIH. Recommenders may also complete the recommendation online. Direct them to http://ugsp.info.nih.gov/applying.htm.

#### **Application Deadline**

Applications for the 2004–2005 school year must be received by February 28, 2004. Applicants will be notified of their award status by mid July 2004.

#### **Evaluation of applications**

The NIH expects to award up to 15 scholarships for the academic year 2004–2005. Awards will be made on a competitive basis according to the selection factors and award priorities described below.

Screening for completeness and for meeting basic requirements. NIH UGSP staff will screen each application for completeness and basic eligibility. If your application is incomplete by the deadline or if you do not meet the basic requirements, you will be notified that you are no longer under consideration for the scholarship.

**Evaluation process**. All qualified applications will be reviewed by an evaluation panel appointed by the NIH.

A critical consideration for ranking the qualifications of applicants will be evidence of the applicant's commitment to a career in biomedical, behavioral or social science health-related research as an employee of the NIH. This commitment will be evaluated, in part, on the following:

- Your academic achievements.
- Recommendations and evaluations of your skills, abilities and goals.
- Relevant extracurricular activities.
- Other information provided in the applicant information form.

**Award priorities**. The following priorities will be considered in assessing how the scholarships will be awarded:

First priority. Applicants who have completed at least 2 years of undergraduate course work, including four core science courses, and are classified by their educational institutions as juniors or seniors as of the beginning of the academic year of scholarship. (Core science courses include biology, chemistry, physics, and calculus; others may be considered.)

Second priority. Applicants who have completed four core science courses, as defined above.

*Third priority.* Applicants who are freshmen or sophomores.

Fourth priority. Applicants who are high school seniors and have been accepted for enrollment as full-time undergraduate students in accredited colleges or universities.

#### **Personal interviews**

At the discretion of the NIH UGSP, interviews may be conducted with scholarship finalists in person or by phone. If necessary, these interviews will take place during the summer.

If you are selected for an interview, the interviewers will review your research interests, awards, skills, accomplishments, current projects, and extra-curricular activities—especially those related to science. The interviewers will also discuss your understanding of the service obligations and your post-service career plans. In addition, the interviewers may ask other questions raised during the evaluation of your application.

#### Notification of UGSP Application and Award

When you apply to the UGSP, the NIH may contact your school(s) and recommenders to confirm information provided in your application materials. Additionally, if you are accepted as a scholarship recipient, the NIH will send notification of this prestigious national award to your school's financial aid office, your recommenders, your school's president, and your congressional representatives. The notification will indicate that you are a participant in the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds.



#### SCHOLARSHIP BENEFITS

NIH Undergraduate Scholarships are awarded for 1-year periods (renewable up to 4 years) and cover tuition and reasonable educational and living expenses up to \$20,000 for each academic year. In return, recipients commit to two types of service obligation for each year of scholarship: (1) 10-week summer service as a paid employee in an NIH research laboratory and (2) after graduation, 1 year of full-time paid employment in an NIH research laboratory. Additional information on the service obligation is presented in the fact sheets entitled *10-Week Summer Laboratory Experience* and *Service Obligation after Graduation*.

#### Scholarship benefits

The NIH UGSP will make payments directly to your institution, which will be responsible for administering the funds.

**Tuition and fees.** The UGSP will pay your institution directly for tuition and fees. If you have already paid your tuition and required fees, you will be reimbursed by the school after payment is received from the UGSP.

#### Reasonable educational and living expenses.

The NIH UGSP will make payments to your school at the beginning of each term or quarter for reasonable educational expenses. These expenses may include required books, laboratory expenses, and graduation fees. The scholarship will not pay for tuition costs unrelated to the degree program, membership dues for student societies or associations, loan processing fees, and similar expenses.

Scholars may also receive a stipend for reasonable living expenses during the academic year. These are based on the school's average of allowable expenses incurred per student within the same class year and major. If a stipend is awarded, the payment level is determined by the NIH UGSP based on information provided by your school. The stipend may also include a prorated amount for required books. Stipends are usually paid directly to your school for their redistribution to you.

*Note:* The receipt of the stipend during the school year does not mean you are employed by the Federal Government or that you participate in any of the benefits available to Federal employees.

## Approval of academic program and acceptable performance

The NIH must approve your proposed academic program for the scholarship year, and you must agree not to alter the program without prior approval from the NIH. You must send a copy of your course schedule as soon as it has been set by the school. In addition, you must maintain an acceptable level of academic standing, as determined by your academic institution, in accordance with regulations issued by the NIH. If you delay the submission of your academic program, the release of UGSP funds will also be delayed.

### Questions and answers about scholarship benefits

#### Can I receive benefits from other sources?

Receipt of an NIH scholarship does not automatically mean you cannot receive funds from other sources, as long as the sources do not involve service obligations. However, many student assistance programs are based on financial need and may cover expenses already paid by the scholarship. You should contact your school's financial aid officer to determine how an NIH scholarship may affect other assistance. Usually, the total of all awards cannot exceed your expenses.

*Note:* Educational benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (under the G.I. Bill) continue along with scholarship funds, since these benefits were earned by prior active duty in a uniformed service.

Are the benefits taxable? The scholarship is taxable. It is your responsibility to arrange for the payment of any Federal, State, and local taxes that may be owed. Applicants should consult IRS Publication 520 to determine the potential effect of scholarship funds on taxable income.

What if I need additional funds? If tuition, educational, and living expenses exceed \$20,000, the NIH UGSP cannot provide additional funds.

What if I need to repeat courses or take a lighter schedule? The NIH UGSP will pay tuition for courses taken for the first time only. However, if a repeated course is taken in addition to a full-time course load and the repeated course does not delay the graduation date, payment of the stipend will continue, but the scholarship will not pay for repeated courses.

## What if there are breaks in my course work? Scholars who have breaks in their course work must submit documentation explaining the circumstances and demonstrating a continued

must submit documentation explaining the circumstances and demonstrating a continued commitment to biomedical research. If scholarship recipients have breaks in their course work extending beyond 1 year, an interview will be required before the NIH can resume scholarship support.

Participants incurring a break in their education must also submit documentation from a school official confirming that they (1) are enrolled as full-time students in courses leading to the degree for which they received scholarship support and (2) are not repeating course work.

# What if I delay my graduation? The NIH UGSP will discontinue the payment of all benefits when: (1) the school has approved a scholar's leave of absence for personal or medical reasons or (2) a scholar's graduation is delayed by a requirement to repeat course work or by a change to a decelerated, nontraditional, or part-time program.

You are required to notify the NIH UGSP office in writing when considering a leave of absence, repeat of course work, or a decelerated, nontraditional, or part-time program. You must also forward a letter from your school verifying the changes made in your undergraduate program.



#### 10-WEEK SUMMER LABORATORY EXPERIENCE

Two kinds of service obligations (forms of payback) are required from each scholarship recipient. After each scholarship year, you must serve for 10 consecutive weeks (during the summer) as a full-time employee in an NIH research laboratory. In addition, after graduation you must serve 1 year (52 weeks) for each year of scholarship support as a full-time NIH employee. You will be paid at established Federal Government rates for this service. Substantial penalties apply to students who fail to meet their service obligations. This fact sheet describes the 10-week service obligation.

#### NIH summer laboratory experience

After each year of the scholarship, you will be required to work as an employee in an NIH research laboratory for 10 consecutive weeks. This employment occurs during the summer after the receipt of the UGSP award. This service must take place during the months of June, July, and August, with some flexibility to the actual start date in June, depending upon your academic calendar. Students will normally begin service upon completion of the school year. You must serve 10 consecutive weeks. Adjustments in the ending date may be made by the NIH if the obligation is suspended, interrupted, waived, or otherwise delayed.

#### **Determination of laboratory assignments.**

Laboratory assignments will be made by matching your interests and skills with research projects at an NIH laboratory. You will receive a list of vacancies and will be asked to fill out a *Research Interest Questionnaire* to document your research interests and skills and assist the NIH in matching these with available laboratory positions. Normally, scholars will visit the NIH campus in early January to meet potential laboratory mentors and be matched for the summer service period.

If you fail to obtain a placement in one of the listed vacancies by the deadlines announced by the NIH UGSP, you will be assigned to a position. The NIH reserves the right to make final decisions on all placements to comply with the statutory requirements for the placement of scholars.

#### Compensation

For your 10-week service, you will be hired as a Federal Government employee (student trainee) and be paid according to the classification level of the job. Depending on your educational level and experience, you will be eligible for positions in the range of General Service (GS) levels GS-3 to GS-5, which pay approximately \$10 to \$13 per hour. As a UGSP student trainee, you will be eligible for both annual and sick leave and may purchase subsidized health insurance.

Housing. The NIH will make arrangements for you to reside in housing shared by other scholars in the Bethesda, Maryland area. It is strongly recommended that you use this housing to facilitate access to the NIH laboratories, library, computer facilities, lectures, and symposia. These arrangements also will give you better opportunities to network with other scholars, NIH mentors, graduate students, and NIH post-doctoral trainees.

**Transportation**. Reasonable costs of transportation to and from your undergraduate institution or permanent residence to the NIH will be covered by the UGSP.

#### NIH mentors

An important goal of the summer research experience is for you to develop a mentoring relationship with an NIH researcher. The one-on-one mentor relationship is considered critical to your development, both professionally and personally. The mentor will provide support and advice to guide your development as a biomedical researcher. The NIH mentoring experience is designed to motivate and encourage you as you plan a career in biomedical research.

## Other activities for the 10-week summer program

**Courses**. To support your professional development, the following courses are required during the 10-week summer experience:

- Laboratory Safety for Summer Research Associates
- Working Safely with HIV and Other Bloodborne Pathogens in the Research Laboratory
- Radiation Safety
- Ethics for Biomedical Researchers

You will also be required to attend sessions of the UGSP Summer Workshop Series. (A schedule will be provided upon arrival at the NIH.) You should anticipate that the workshop series is academically rigorous and that it requires several hours each week, in addition to the time spent in your lab assignment. **Poster Day**. You will be required to participate in the NIH Poster Day. This will be an opportunity for you to present information about your laboratory project. Although results may not be available from your experiments, you will be able to present background information, data, and issues that arose during your research.

**Keeping a journal**. It is suggested that you keep a journal describing your experience at the NIH. At the beginning of the 10-week period, you will be given guidelines for recording your personal and professional development in the journal.

#### Visit from undergraduate institution mentor.

Your faculty mentor or research advisor from your undergraduate institution may visit the NIH campus once during your 10-week laboratory experience. The visit will offer an opportunity for the faculty mentor to learn about your research project, to assess your progress, and to discuss your experiences with your NIH research mentor. It will also provide an opportunity to integrate your NIH research project with your academic program at your undergraduate institution. This visit usually coincides with the activities of NIH Poster Day.

**Evaluations and assessments**. At the start of the summer program, you will be given an opportunity to conduct a self-assessment of your skills and to set goals for the 10-week experience in terms of professional and personal development.

In addition, assessment and evaluation measurements may be developed in conjunction with your NIH laboratory mentor. The evaluations are intended to provide you with information on your strengths and areas that need further development.



#### SERVICE OBLIGATION AFTER GRADUATION

As an NIH Undergraduate Scholar, you will incur 1 year (52 weeks) of obligated service at the NIH for each full or partial year of support. The maximum service obligation is 4 years. Scholars are obliged to serve as full-time NIH employees in an NIH research laboratory. This fact sheet describes the post-graduation service obligation.

#### Service obligation

You must begin your service within 60 days of completing the requirements for your undergraduate degree, unless a deferment is granted by the NIH UGSP (see below).

The last day of the service obligation is determined in whole years from the starting date. Adjustments in the ending date may be made by the NIH if the obligation is suspended, interrupted, waived, or otherwise delayed.

*Note:* The end of your obligated service, of course, does not necessarily mean the end of your employment at the NIH. A primary goal of the program is to attract you to a long-term career at the NIH.

Generally, the NIH UGSP will defer the service obligation to enable you to complete accredited graduate or medical education programs. More information on these deferments is presented below.

Scholars with extreme circumstances that jeopardize the start of service may request the NIH to suspend their service obligations for up to 1 year. Such requests require a detailed written explanation and will be granted only if extreme circumstances have been documented.

#### Licensure requirement

Scholars who fulfill their service obligation after completion of a medical degree must meet the requirements for licensure and residency training specific to the NIH program for which they are applying. Federal employees who are medical doctors involved in clinical care are required to be licensed. Responsibility for obtaining the required license prior to the service start date rests with the scholars.

#### Position assignments at the NIH

Scholars must fulfill their service obligation in approved positions at NIH intramural research laboratories. These positions may include placement at NIH facilities in the following locations: Bethesda, Poolesville, Frederick, and Baltimore, Maryland; Research Triangle Park, North Carolina; Hamilton, Montana; and Phoenix, Arizona.

You will be advised about seeking a research position at the NIH. If you fail to obtain a placement in one of the listed vacancies by the deadline announced by the NIH, you will be assigned to a position.

The NIH reserves the right to make final decisions on all placements in satisfaction of its statutory requirements for placement of scholars.

#### **Breach of contract**

As explained in the fact sheet entitled *The Fine Print* and in the contract, there are substantial penalties for failing to begin or to complete the service obligations.

#### Deferments for graduate or medical studies

Scholars will ordinarily begin serving as fulltime NIH employees within 60 days after obtaining their undergraduate degrees. Generally, the NIH UGSP will defer the postgraduation service obligation to enable scholars to complete accredited graduate or medical education programs that will lead to careers in biomedical research.

If you elect to enter an accredited graduate or medical school program immediately upon graduation, you will be provided with the policies, procedures and forms for requesting deferments and a *Deferment Request Form* to enable you to inform the NIH UGSP of your graduate study plans.

If you enter post-graduate training that is not approved for deferment, or otherwise fail to comply with the published terms and conditions of deferment, you will be subject to the breach-of-contract provisions described in the fact sheet entitled *The Fine Print* and in the contract.

#### **Conditions of deferment**

The following terms and conditions apply to the deferment of obligations:

 You must pursue training that is approved for deferment by the NIH UGSP and that does not incur conflicting service obligations.

- You must complete and return the Deferment Request Form or provide equivalent evidence of training by the deadline.
- You must make no change in the type or period of training without prior written approval of the NIH UGSP.
- You must notify the NIH UGSP within 15 days of moving to a new mailing address and of any changes that affect your training status

Participants who fail to comply with these terms and conditions for deferment will be considered in breach of their contract and subject to the damages provision described in the contact.

#### Training for which deferments are not granted

Deferment of the service obligation will not be approved for programs that do not lead to graduate or medical degrees that prepare students for careers in biomedical research.

Deferments also cannot be granted for postgraduate medical education conducted or sponsored by a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. These programs require service obligations that would conflict with the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship service obligation.

#### Possible placements

The following should give you an idea of the types of placements that are possible for the post-graduation service obligation. Please note that the salary amounts indicated are those currently in effect. These may change by the time of your service.

#### If you have a bachelor's degree

If you have a B.S. or a B.A. degree, you may be eligible for entry-level or trainee research positions at \$26,000 to \$28,000 as of May 2003, dependent upon academic achievement and experience. Potential positions could include biologist, microbiologist, chemist, or computer specialist.

#### If you have a doctoral degree

If you have received a deferment and have obtained a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or M.D.), you may be eligible for a post-doctoral fellowship to fulfill the post-graduation service obligation. Post-doctoral training positions, depending upon education and experience, may start at \$34,000 to \$44,000 as of September 2003. These positions are available in two pathways:

Laboratory Research Pathway. You will engage in pure laboratory research. Applicants for this training pathway must have either a graduate doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D. or M.D./Ph.D.) or a professional degree (e.g., M.D., D.O., D.D.S., D.M.D., Pharm.D., or D.V.M.), accompanied by previous research laboratory experience.

Combined Clinical and Research Pathway. You will receive clinical subspecialty training at the NIH as well as training in clinical and/or basic research. To qualify for this pathway, you must possess a degree in medicine or dentistry. The following programs are available:

• Clinical Associate Program. Provides the opportunity for physicians and dentists to participate in clinical and laboratory research with primary patient-care responsibilities. Fellows must have completed 2 to 3 years of post-doctoral medical or dental training. Fellows may be employed by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) as commissioned officers or as staff fellows in the civil service.

- Research Associate Program. Trains physicians and dentists to conduct laboratory research in the biomedical sciences that does not entail patient-care responsibilities. Applicants must have completed less than 3 years of post-doctoral laboratory research at the time of application (most have had some research experience). Appointments are in the civil service as a staff fellow or as a commissioned officer in the PHS.
- Staff Fellowship. Trains individuals with doctoral degrees and no more than 3 years of post-doctoral research experience to conduct biomedical laboratory research.
- Senior Staff Fellowship. Trains individuals with doctoral degrees who have completed 3 or more years of laboratory research experience.



## Deferring the Service Obligations of NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program Participants for Approved Undergraduate, Graduate, and Medical Training

#### **DEFERMENT INFORMATION BULLETIN**

This **Bulletin** is for National Institutes of Health (NIH) Undergraduate Scholarship Program (UGSP) participants who: (1) are enrolled in undergraduate institutions but not receiving a UGSP scholarship for this school year; (2) have graduated from undergraduate institutions and are requesting deferment of the service obligation; or (3) are continuing in approved graduate or medical training programs.

The **Bulletin** is based on the current Federal statutes, regulations, and administrative guidelines in effect for the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program. It explains the terms and conditions for a deferment of your NIH UGSP service obligation.

#### I. Program Authorities for Deferments

**Federal Statute.** Section 487D of the Public Health Service Act (Title 42 United States Code, Section 288-4).

#### II. Program Administration

Deferments of participants' service obligation for the NIH UGSP are administered by the Office of Loan Repayment and Scholarship (OLRS), Office of Intramural Research (OIR), 2 Center Drive, Room 2E30, MSC 0230, Bethesda, Maryland 20892-0230, telephone 1-800-528-7689 during office hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. The fax number is 301-480-3123.

#### III. Definitions

What is a "Deferment"? A deferment is a delay in the start of an NIH UGSP service obligation granted by the Director, OLRS. Requests for deferment must be made by the scholar. Deferments may be granted for the academic year and continued for a specified period of time in order for the scholar to enter and complete an approved graduate or medical training program, in accordance with the program's Federal statute and regulations, and the administrative guidelines set forth in this Bulletin.

#### What is an "Undergraduate Degree

**Program"?** An *undergraduate degree program* is an academic program that culminates in a baccalaureate degree (B.A., B.S., or equivalent).

What is "Graduate or Medical Training"? *Graduate or medical training* is an academic program that culminates in a doctoral degree (such as Ph.D. or M.D.).

#### What is "Postgraduate Training"?

*Postgraduate training* is postgraduate clinical training accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

What does "Completion of Residency" mean? Completion of residency is the minimum time period of approved postgraduate clinical training required for a physician to sit for a specialty board's certifying examination(s).

What does "Postponement of Service Obligation" mean? The OLRS Director may grant a delay in the start of the service obligation, in intervals of up to 1 year, for reasons other than for approved graduate or medical training. Requests for postponement must be submitted in writing to the OLRS with the required documentation. For more information, see Section V of this Bulletin.

#### IV. General Rules for Deferments

Deferments will not be considered for training conducted by any entity that imposes a service obligation, such as a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States. In addition, deferments will not be considered for graduate training programs which culminate in a master's-level degree: only doctoral-level training (such as Ph.D. and M.D. programs) is eligible for deferment of the UGSP service obligation.

#### The Terms and Conditions of Deferment

#### You must:

- 1. Receive approval of your request for deferment by the Director, OLRS.
- 2. Pursue only the graduate or medical training officially approved for your deferment by the Director, OLRS.
- 3. Submit documentation to the OLRS of your training status in the approved program prior to each year of training. (Submission of an annual Deferment Request Form satisfies this requirement.)

- **4.** Make no changes in your period or type of training without prior written approval from the Director, OLRS.
- 5. Notify the Director, OLRS, in writing, within 30 days of any change of an address, intent to terminate training, or similar change.
- **6.** Commence service pay-back within 60 days of the end of the deferment.

#### **Ending Training to Begin Service**

How do I discontinue my deferment after it has been approved? If you decide at any time during your deferment that you want to discontinue your training and begin payback of your service obligation, you should promptly contact the OLRS for guidance. You are cautioned that once you start your NIH UGSP service obligation, you must complete 52 weeks of your obligation before resuming additional training (unless OLRS grants an exception due to extraordinary circumstances; see below for details).

#### V. Postponement of the Service Obligation

### Postponement During Undergraduate Attendance

Scholars who do not receive a renewal of their scholarship and remain as full-time students in an approved program of study must submit annual verification of their continued enrollment in an undergraduate degree program.

#### **Medical and Personal Postponements**

What are the requirements for a postponement of my service obligation for personal or medical reasons? Postponements may be granted by the Director, OLRS, in intervals of up to 1 year. The Director, OLRS, determines if compliance with the obligation is temporarily impossible based on information from you and independent documentation from health professionals treating you that you suffer

from a physical or mental disability resulting in your temporary inability to comply with your scholarship service obligation. A postponement may also be granted if you can document any problems of a personal nature such as a physical or mental disability, or terminal illness in your immediate family, which the Director, OLRS, determines would temporarily render you unable to perform the service obligation you have incurred. "Family member" includes the following relatives of scholars:

- (a) spouse and spouse's parents;
- (b) children, including adopted children, and their spouses;
- (c) parents;
- (d) brothers and sisters, and their spouses;
- (e) any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the scholar is the equivalent of a family relationship.

In addition, once a scholar has begun a 52-week period of service, they are expected to complete it without interruption. An exception may be granted in extraordinary circumstances (such as an unavoidable conflict with an approved graduate or medical training program's start date, which was unknown to the scholar at the beginning of service payback period).

Requests for postponements must be submitted in writing to the Director, OLRS.

### VI. Failure to Meet the Terms and Conditions of Deferment

What will happen if I do not comply with the terms of a deferment of my service obligation? You are responsible for having your school submit a signed deferment form verifying enrollment in an approved undergraduate, graduate, or medical training program to the Office of Loan Repayment and Scholarship no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year. If you fail to submit the form, or fail to comply with the terms and conditions of your deferment, you are subject to the default

provisions of the Undergraduate Scholarship Program. If you breach your contract for failure to meet the terms and conditions of deferment, the United States shall be entitled to recover damages, in accordance with the following formulas:

Regardless of your number of years of scholarship support, if you fail to complete at least 1 year of service to the NIH, then you owe the full amount of scholarship support provided to you, plus \$1,000 for every month of obligated service—even if you completed some of those months.

If you received 2 years or less of scholarship support and you complete at least 1 year of service to the NIH, then you owe the full amount of scholarship support provided to you, plus \$1,000 for each month of obligated service that is not completed.

If you received more than 2 years of scholarship support and fail to complete at least 2 years of service to the NIH (but completed at least 1 year—see above), then you owe the full amount of scholarship support provided to you, plus \$1,000 for each month of obligated service that is not completed.

If you received more than 2 years of scholarship support and complete at least 2 years of service to the NIH, then you owe the amount of scholarship support provided to you for the period of obligated service that is not completed, plus \$10,000, if you fail to provide at least 1 year notice of your intention to breach the contract.

The damages that the United States is entitled to recover must be paid within 1 year of the date of default. If the debt is not repaid in 1 year and subsequent collection efforts are unsuccessful, the case will be referred to the Department of Justice for litigation. All delinquent debts must be reported to a commercial credit bureau and are subject to charges for the administrative and court costs of collection.

Scholars who withdraw from an undergraduate degree program prior to obtaining their degree will be declared in breach of contract and held liable to the United States for repayment of all scholarship funds paid to them and/or to their school on their behalf. The amount owed must be repaid in full within 3 years from the date of default.

#### PRIVACY ACT NOTIFICATION STATEMENT

The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a) requires that a Federal agency provide the following notification to each individual whom it asks to supply information. Information collected herein is contained in the System of Records of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) numbered 09-25-0165, National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Loan Repayment and Scholarship (OLRS) Records, HHS/NIH/OD. An update of this system of records was published in the *Federal Register* on February 8, 2002 (67 Fed. Reg. 6043), and on the Internet at <a href="http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\_docs/aces/aces/40.html">http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\_docs/aces/aces/40.html</a>.

If you have questions about completing the Deferment Request Form, please call the NIH Undergraduate Scholarship Program office at 1-800-528-7689 during office hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday. Questions may be submitted to the Director, UGSP.



#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

Your academic institution must provide information to be submitted as part of the application. During the scholarship period, the institution will administer funds, provide information to the NIH, provide academic guidance, and provide access to the Internet.

#### **Pre-award information**

As part of the application, the academic institution must provide information about the applicant's enrollment, academic, and financial status (i.e., whether the applicant qualifies as having exceptional financial need). The institution must certify tuition expenses and estimate reasonable expenses related to approved course work and reasonable living expenses based on the institution's standards.

Once the award is made, the institution will accept scholarship award payments from the NIH and distribute funds on behalf of the scholar.

## Faculty member to serve as mentor and advisor

The undergraduate institution must appoint a faculty member to serve as the scholar's mentor and advisor. This faculty member should be able to respond sensitively to the developmental and educational needs of an individual from a disadvantaged background who is pursuing a career in biomedical research. The faculty mentor's roles include the following:

- Provide curriculum guidance and assist the student in selecting appropriate courses.
- Meet with the scholar at least once a month to assess progress and provide advice about any difficulties that may arise.

- Complete a sequence of evaluations, provided by the NIH, to assess the scholar's progress during the scholarship year.
- Visit the NIH campus (reasonable travel expenses covered by the NIH) during the scholar's 10-week laboratory experience to assess progress and set goals for the coming academic year.

#### Scholarship supplements

The undergraduate institution will be encouraged to supplement tuition, educational, and living expenses that exceed \$20,000.

#### Access to the Internet

The undergraduate institution should provide the scholar with access to the Internet and the World Wide Web. This will allow access to biomedical research information as well as information about the UGSP that is posted on the World Wide Web. Internet access and an e-mail account also will facilitate communication with NIH mentors and other scholars. Under exceptional circumstances, undergraduate institutions without Internet access or computer equipment may request assistance from the UGSP to satisfy this requirement.



#### THE FINE PRINT

Before you apply for an NIH Undergraduate Scholarship, you and your parents or guardians should read the enclosed contract and be aware of all the conditions and obligations that apply to the award. This page summarizes the most important issues.

#### Discrimination prohibited

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C.A. 2000d) states:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations (45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 86) provide that no person in the United States shall, based on his/her sex, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.A. 794), as amended, provides that no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

On December 6, 1993, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) stated:

To foster an atmosphere of continuous improvement in our products and services, we must create an environment that fully utilizes the talents and capabilities of each and every one of us, from all backgrounds.... And to do this, we must strengthen our commitment to a workplace that is free of discrimination... a workplace where no one is denied the opportunity to contribute fully because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

#### Other requirements

In addition to the application requirements, there are several other requirements that you should consider before making an application.

#### You must be eligible for Federal employment.

As a scholarship recipient, you will fulfill your service obligation as a salaried employee of the Federal Government at the NIH. Therefore, you must be eligible to hold an appointment for Federal civil service with the NIH. (Prior to fulfilling your service requirements, you will receive current information about Federal civil service appointment mechanisms and benefits.)

To fulfill the service obligation after graduation, you must have obtained the skills, education, experience, certificates, and licenses necessary to satisfy requirements of the specific NIH position of interest.

## **obligations**. Applicants who are already obligated to a Federal, State, or other entity for professional practice, or for an extended period of service after academic training, are not

You must have no conflicting service

of service after academic training, are not eligible for UGSP awards. An exception may be made if the obligating entity provides documentation that there is no conflict in fulfilling the service obligation and that the NIH UGSP service obligation will be served first.

Scholarship recipients who subsequently enter into other service obligations, or who otherwise are not immediately available after authorized training deferments to fulfill their scholarship service obligations, or who interrupt NIH UGSP service to satisfy other service, will be subject to the breach-of-contract provisions described below.

Scholarship recipients should not expect to be assigned for service in a State, community, NIH grantee institution, or other entity to which they may already owe an obligation for service. All service obligations will be fulfilled at the NIH.

#### You must be free of Federal judgment liens.

Applicants who have a lien against their property arising from a court judgment entered against them for a debt owed to the United States or arising from a civil or criminal proceeding regarding a debt are not eligible for a scholarship until the judgment lien has been paid in full or otherwise satisfied. A State court judgment relating to a Federal debt will also disqualify an applicant. The *Applicant Information* form includes a statement of certification that the applicant is free of such a judgment lien against his or her property.

#### You must be free of delinquent Federal loans.

The application also includes a certification that the applicant is not delinquent on repayment of any Federal debt. Delinquent borrowers are not eligible to apply. Delinquency in repaying Federal debts includes, but is not limited to, federally guaranteed or federally sponsored student loans that are more than 31 days past due on a scheduled payment.

## Breach of contract: Defaulting on the scholarship obligation

What circumstances can lead to default?

#### Failure to complete academic training.

Scholarship recipients who are dismissed from school for academic or disciplinary reasons, or who voluntarily terminate academic training before graduation from the educational program for which the scholarship was awarded, will be declared in breach of contract and held liable to the United States for repayment of all scholarship funds paid to them and to the school on their behalf. The amount owed must be paid in full within 3 years from the date of default. No interest will be charged on any part of this debt to the United States within the 3-year period. If payment in full is not made within the 3-year period, interest at the prime rate level on the date of execution of the contract will be assessed thereafter.

Failure to begin or complete the service obligation or meet the terms and conditions of deferment. Scholarship recipients who, for any reason, fail to comply with the terms and conditions of deferment described earlier or fail to begin or complete their service obligations after completion of academic training will be in breach of their contracts. When recipients breach their contracts for these reasons, the United States shall be entitled to recover damages, in accordance with the following formulas:

Regardless of your number of years of scholarship support, if you fail to complete at least 1 year of service to the NIH, then you owe the full amount of scholarship support provided to you, plus \$1,000 for every month of obligated service—even if you completed some of those months.

If you received 2 years or less of scholarship support and you complete at least 1 year of service to the NIH, then you owe the full amount of scholarship support provided to you, plus \$1,000 for each month of obligated service that is not completed.

If you received more than 2 years of scholarship support and fail to complete at least 2 years of service to the NIH (but completed at least 1 year—see above), then you owe the full amount of scholarship support provided to you, plus \$1,000 for each month of obligated service that is not completed.

If you received more than 2 years of scholarship support and complete at least 2 years of service to the NIH, then you owe the amount of scholarship support provided to you for the period of obligated service that is not completed, plus \$10,000, if you fail to provide at least 1 year notice of your intention to breach the contract.

The damages that the United States is entitled to recover shall be paid within 1 year of the date of default.

How are delinquent debts collected?

**Litigation**. If the debt is not repaid in 1 year and subsequent collection efforts are unsuccessful, the case will then be referred to the Department of Justice for litigation. All delinquent debts must be reported to a commercial credit bureau and are subject to charges for the administrative and court costs of collection.

IRS tax refund offsets and Medicare offset agreements and exclusions. The Public Health Service is authorized by Section 2653 of the Deficit Reduction Act to request the Internal Revenue Service to offset income tax refunds due to delinquent defaulters, crediting the refunds to their UGSP financial debts.

Under what circumstances can there be a waiver or suspension of the service or payment obligation?

Scholarship recipients seeking a waiver or suspension of the service or payment obligation must submit a written request to the Director, NIH UGSP. The request must state the underlying circumstances and be supported by documentation.

Suspensions or waivers of the service or payment obligation will be considered and may be granted by the Director, NIH UGSP, whenever compliance by the individual would be impossible or would involve extreme hardship to the individual, and if enforcement of the service or payment obligation would be against equity and good conscience.

Compliance would be considered *impossible* if the Director, NIH UGSP, determined that the participant suffered from a physical or mental disability resulting in the total and permanent inability of the recipient to perform the service or other activities that would be necessary to comply with the obligation. To determine whether the performance of the obligation would impose an undue hardship and be against equity and good conscience, the NIH UGSP Director will consider:

- 1. The recipient's present financial resources and obligations.
- 2. The recipient's estimated future financial resources and obligations.
- 3. The extent to which the recipient has problems of a personal nature, such as physical or mental disability, or terminal illness in the immediate family, which so intrude on the recipient's present and future ability to perform as to raise a presumption that the individual will be unable to perform the obligation incurred.

All obligations are canceled in the event of a scholarship recipient's death.